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ARMY INTERROGATION UNIT AT DRC
C/O 513TH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE GROUP
APO 757 US ARMY

22 May 1957

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ALLEGED AMERICAN PRISONERS IN SOVIET LABOR CAMPS

Report No: Juliett-A-2240

Summary : This report contains vague information of alleged American soldiers who were confined in Soviet controlled jails and prison camps in Austria and the USSR during 1948 to 1955. Source claimed that he was an inmate at all listed camps and jails and that during his imprisonment, came into personal contact with two of the five alleged American soldiers.

This is the first Army Interrogation Unit report based on Source's information. It will not be published as a RC report.

Source : Non-DRC Source Juliett was born in SZEKESFEHERVAR (N47-12, E18-25) (UTM CT 0430), Hungary in 1927. He served in the Hungarian Army in an unknown capacity from October 1944 to February 1945. He was in various prisoner of war camps in Hungary and the USSR from February 1945 to October 1945. After his release from the camps Source was an apprentice electrician in Hungary. From March 1948 to January 1956 Source was again interned in different prison camps in Hungary and the USSR. He was released in January 1956 and defected into Austria in November 1956. Source was enlisted in the US Army on 6 May 1957 under the auspices of the Alien Enlistee Program.

Source was cooperative and well mannered throughout the interrogation. He appeared to be of good spirits, despite the suffering he claimed to have undergone in various Soviet camps. He appeared to be sincere and had average native intelligence.

Date of Information: 1948 to 1955

Interrogator: 1st Lt George Singer

JSB/nfb

Reviewed and approved:

Joseph S. Bochnowski
JOSEPH S. BOCHNOWSKI
Lt Col Arty
Chief, Army Interrogation Unit

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ON 18 JUN 1990
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Juliett-A-2240

ALLEGED AMERICAN PRISONERS IN SOVIET LABOR CAMPS

Source escaped from Hungary for the first time in March 1948 into Austria. His reason for fleeing at that time was due to being involved in the killing of a Russian soldier in his hometown of SZEKESFEHERVAR (N47-12, E18-25) (UTM CT 0430), Hungary, when the latter attempted to rape a Hungarian acquaintance of Source.

After Source successfully escaped into Austria, he turned himself over to the British authorities, who interrogated him and assured him of political asylum at a later date. After an approximate two months of stay in the British zone of Austria, Source decided to return to Hungary with the intention of contacting his fiancée in Hungary and to attempt an escape with her to Austria. While attempting to cross over to Hungary, he was captured by a Hungarian border patrol and arrested.

After his arrest, he was turned over to the Hungarian secret police who by means of torture and beatings, interrogated him at length about his activities across the Hungarian frontier. Source stated that after stubbornly resisting the interrogations, he was tried for espionage, convicted and sentenced to 25 years of hard labor.

After conviction, Source was transferred from jail to jail in Hungary for approximately two to three months, in August 1948 he was confined in a Soviet controlled jail in NEUKIRCHEN, in the Soviet zone of Austria.

Source remained at this jail from August 1948 until December 1948, when he was transferred to a prisoner collecting camp in LVOV, USSR. The approximately 70,000 prisoners at this camp, consisted of political prisoners of all nationalities.

After remaining in this camp for approximately two weeks, Source was transferred to a prison camp at INTA (N66-00, E60-00), USSR in December 1948. Prisoners at the INTA camp worked in nearby coal mines and did construction work. Source remained here until March 1955.

In March 1955, all prisoners of foreign nationalities were consolidated into the "Potyana-Javasz" prison camp, which was located approximately 400 to 500 km southeast of MOSCOW (coordinates unknown). Source remained at this camp until the amnesty of May 1956 when he was returned to Hungary. Four months later he was released by the Hungarian officials with the WW II Prisoners of War Returnees from the USSR.

During his imprisonment at these prison camps and jails, Source allegedly came into contact with certain inmates who claimed to be Americans. Based on these contacts, Source gave the following information on five alleged Americans.

Alleged American Prisoner at the Neukirchen Jail¹

When Source was imprisoned at the Neukirchen jail he came into contact with an inmate who claimed to have been an American soldier. He was known to Source by the name of BRUGER (fmr). His rank, unit and residence in the United States were unknown to Source. BRUGER's birthplace, according to him, was an unknown place in Sweden. BRUGER told Source that he was arrested by the Soviets in March of 1948 in VIENNA, and was tried and convicted of espionage and then sentenced to 25 years hard labor. At the time of his arrest, he was working in civilian clothes in VIENNA.

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Source stated that BRUGER spoke a number of languages and claimed to have traveled in India, Iran, Greece, Turkey and several other Mid-Eastern countries, and that in addition to English and German he could fluently speak the languages of most of these countries.

Source estimated BRUGER to be between 46 and 48 years old.

Source stated that BRUGER divulged only information about the reason for his arrest, the sentence he received, his being an American soldier, his world travels and the fact that he was born in Sweden and he spoke of these only in very general terms. Source was told neither with what military unit BRUGER served, what his rank was, under what circumstances he was arrested, his family background nor his place of residence in the United States.

On 11 December 1948, Source and BRUGER were transferred from the Neukirchen jail to the prison camp in LVOV, USSR. They remained at this camp for approximately two weeks, after which, both Source and BRUGER were transferred to a prison camp in INTA, USSR. Here they worked on construction work and in coal mines.

Source and BRUGER remained together until April 1949 at which time BRUGER was transferred from this camp to a prison camp (K-40, E62-00), USSR, which was about 70 kilometers north of INTA. Source did not know why BRUGER was transferred to this camp. Until the summer of 1951, Source received information from inmates arriving at the Inta camp from the Abez camp, confirming that BRUGER was located at the Abez camp. After the summer of 1951, Source lost all contact with BRUGER. Even though they were confined in the same cell for a considerable length of time, Source was unable to give any further information this person.

Three Alleged American Soldier Prisoners at the Neukirchen Jail

During Source's confinement in the jail at NEUKIRCHEN in 1948, he observed three uniformed American soldiers confined in the same jail. They were confined together in cell number one and were fed separately from the other prisoners. Special guards were stationed in front of their cell door keeping them under close and constant surveillance. Communication between them and other inmates was practically impossible and their presence in the jail was supposed to be secret. Each night between 2330 and 2400 hours they were taken for walks. On one occasion, Source was able to observe them and noticed that one of the three prisoners wore "pink and greens" and the other two wore "olive drab" uniforms. Later, Source learned from other prisoners that one prisoner was an American Army officer, rank unknown, and the other two prisoners were NCOs whose ranks were also unknown.

Source had no knowledge as to why these prisoners were there, what their unit was or how, when, where and by whom they were confined. Source did not know how long they had been in the jail prior to his confinement there.

Source stated that these alleged American prisoners remained at this jail after he was transferred to the prisoner collecting camp in LVOV, USSR in December 1948. Source had no further information pertaining to these prisoners.

Alleged American Prisoner at the "POLYNA JAVASZ" Prison Camp

In March 1955 after Source arrived at this camp, he met a prisoner by the name of HOPKINS (im), who claimed to be an American soldier. HOPKINS stated that he had been arrested somewhere near the American-Soviet Zone border in 1949. He stated further that he had been arrested on a charge of larceny and had been sentenced to 25 years of hard labor. The exact location and date of his arrest were unknown to Source.

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HOPKINS' rank, unit and first name were unknown to Source; however, he could speak Russian. Source did not know how long HOPKINS had been confined in the "Prison JAVASZ".

Source stated that HOPKINS, in August 1955, was transferred from this camp to an unknown location. He was the only prisoner, to Source's knowledge, to have been transferred individually from this camp. Source was unaware of any interrogation of HOPKINS and that until his transfer he had worked with other inmates as a forced laborer.

Source had never discussed personal backgrounds with HOPKINS and was unable to give any further details pertaining to this prisoner.

1. Interrogator Comment: According to Source, an individual named HUSZAR, Istvan, a Hungarian national presently a Hungarian refugee in VIENNA, Austria, had served with BRUGER in the Abez prison camp in the USSR, after BRUGER was transferred to that camp. Source stated that this person, if he could be contacted, could give definite information pertaining to BRUGER. HUSZAR's exact address in VIENNA is unknown to Source; however, he is reasonably certain that he could be located either through Radio Free Europe or the International Red Cross. Source had heard Radio Free Europe announce HUSZAR's name and location in VIENNA. HUSZAR is between 40 and 50 years of age. Source had no further information on this individual.

Interrogator Comment: According to Source, the prison camp at ABEZ was for prisoners of all nationalities, the majority of them were imprisoned for political crimes. Their work, while at this camp, consisted of the construction of military casernes in the vicinity of ABEZ. Source had no further information pertaining to this camp.

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